

real enemies are their political opponents, I assume, will follow his lead and vote no. They can tell American families they care more about politics than helping them.

But Senators who want to move forward will vote yes. They will vote to advance this process so we can shape it into a bipartisan product and make a law for the American people. That is what working families need. They need us to act. They need us to legislate. Today, they will see exactly who has their backs.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Hala Y. Jarbou, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Michigan.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, once again this week, Republicans are bringing forward a proposal to provide additional coronavirus relief to help protect jobs, to get kids and teachers back in the classroom safely, and to provide funding for the treatments and vaccines we need to defeat this virus, and once again, Democrats are objecting. It is the same old song: Republicans' bill doesn't spend enough. Well, let's talk about that for a minute.

First of all, Republicans are not claiming that the bill we put on the floor this week contains the last dollars we will need to spend in response to the coronavirus. We may need to spend more. This bill is simply an attempt to direct relief funds to some of the biggest priorities right now, like helping the hardest hit small businesses weather this crisis and providing more resources for testing, treatment, and vaccines. These are areas we should all agree on.

Second of all, Democrats' coronavirus proposal—the \$3 trillion bill they proposed—is both unrealistic and irresponsible.

Our Nation is deeply, deeply in debt right now. Next year, our country will owe more than we produce for the first time since the end of World War II. That is a very bad place to be. That is getting toward the kind of debt-to-GDP ratio that helped bring about financial disaster in Greece. While the United States is not Greece, if we grow our debt enough, what happened to the Greek economy could happen here.

Being the United States of America does not exempt us from financial realities. In times of crisis, sometimes you have to borrow money, and that is what we had to do earlier this year with the CARES Act and other coronavirus relief legislation. But we have an absolute responsibility to every American, to every hard-working individual in this country to ensure that we are only borrowing what is absolutely necessary.

Democrats' proposal doesn't even come close to meeting the definition of "necessary spending." To give just one example, Democrats have proposed appropriating a staggering \$1 trillion for States even though the States still—still—haven't spent the money we provided for them in the original CARES Act. Now, it is certainly possible that at some point, we will have to provide some kind of additional assistance to States, but to create a trillion-dollar slush fund for States before they have even spent the money they have already been given would be an incredibly irresponsible use of taxpayer dollars. At least some of that money could be used for coronavirus relief.

Other money in the Democrats' bill would go to measures that have nothing—absolutely nothing—to do with the virus, things like diversity studies in the cannabis industry, a soil health study, federalizing elections, and tax cuts for millionaires in States like New York and California.

One of the biggest priorities in the wake of the coronavirus is helping Americans keep their jobs or to find new ones. It should be front and center in any relief bill. Yet Democrats' massive bill—over \$3 trillion in the Democrats' bill—manages to mention the word "cannabis" more often than the word "job." Diversity studies for marijuana are more important, evidently, than jobs—at least if you look at the Democrats' bill. That should tell you all you need to know about the seriousness of the Democrats' proposal. I would love for the Democratic leader to come down to the floor and explain how a bill that mentions the word "cannabis" more often than the word "job" is a serious coronavirus bill.

Of course, despite the unseriousness of the Democrats' proposal, Republicans have been willing to compromise on a coronavirus bill from the very beginning. We understand how negotiation works, and we knew that we would have to give some ground and that Democrats would have to give some ground. We were and are willing to do just that. But from the beginning,

Democrats have rejected serious negotiation. Sure, they sat in meetings, and they talked about a bill, but at the end of the day, Democrats refused to compromise. It was their bill or no bill, which means that so far, they have chosen no bill.

The only way to get a bill through the Senate and to the President's desk is to develop a compromise bill. Even if the majority leader puts Democrats' exact bill on the floor today, there is no way—no way—it would make it through the Senate, much less be signed into law by the President. So if the Democrats really want a bill, they are going to have to compromise, and that is something they have continued to refuse to do, which leads to the logical conclusion that Democrats don't want a bill at all.

If Democrats really wanted to get relief to Americans, they would work with Republicans to pass a compromise bill even if it didn't contain all the money Democrats want, because even if it were true that the Republican legislation is inadequate, some money is better than no money. If you can't get someone in need all the money you think they should have, you should get them what money you can.

If Democrats really thought it was of overwhelming importance that we deliver relief to Americans right now, they would be working with Republicans to get as much relief as they could through Congress. But, for Democrats, delivering relief to Americans is not really of overwhelming importance. What is of overwhelming importance to Democrats is keeping coronavirus alive as a political issue, and if that means no bill, well then Democrats are OK with that. They would rather have no bill, zero funding, and a political weapon than to have a bill and allow Republicans to say that we helped Americans. So all indications are that when we have a vote later today, they plan to filibuster this bill.

This is not the first time we have seen this. Think back to the end of June. In the wake of George Floyd's death at the knee of a police officer, Americans of all parties came together to push for police reform. Republicans put a police reform bill on the floor of the Senate for debate and amendment—a substantial bill that included 75 to 80 percent of what both Democrats and Republicans said they wanted, the product of years of research and work by Senator TIM SCOTT, who has personal experience on this issue.

And Democrats? Well, Democrats filibustered. That is right. In the face of a nationwide call for police reform legislation, Democrats refused to even move forward to debate the legislation. Why? Because agreeing to work with Republicans on legislation would have taken away much of Democrats' ability to exploit police reform as a political issue. So Democrats filibustered even though, remarkably, they were offered by Senator SCOTT and other supporters

of the bill numerous amendments—10 amendments, 20 amendments—votes, opportunities to improve the bill—at least improve the bill in their eyes into a form that they could pass it.

It is hard not to wonder if some of the violence that we have seen in our cities across the country in recent months could have been avoided if Democrats had not decided to attempt to exploit this issue for political gain.

There is not a lot Republicans can do if Democrats intend to keep prioritizing perceived political advantage over doing their jobs as legislators, but we are going to take this vote on the coronavirus relief bill this week, today, and we are going to keep offering opportunities for Democrats to work with Republicans to help the American people.

Maybe some of the Democratic rank and file will decide that they have had enough of their leaders playing politics and will work with us to resolve and to get some things done for the American people.

Republicans are ready to negotiate. We just need Democrats to come to the table.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, today the Senate will take a rather pointless vote on the latest highly partisan, Republican, emaciated COVID relief bill.

Now, the Republican leader keeps claiming that his bill is an attempt at a bipartisan solution, but of course the bill was drafted solely by Republicans—no input from Democrats—and rushed to the floor.

Mr. Leader, go look up in the dictionary what bipartisanship is. It is both parties working together, not your party doing a bill and then saying it is bipartisan.

What the Republican leader has done is no one's idea of bipartisanship, not even his own Members'.

Let's go over history. He has done this trick before: COVID 2, COVID 3, COVID 3.5. In each case, Republicans came out—the leader came out saying he did his own bill, saying: This is the only bill that will pass. Democrats are blocking it.

Democrats held strong, and what happened? We got much better bills with many of the things we wanted. We got truly bipartisan bills once the leader determined that he had to negotiate with Democrats to pass something. That will happen again. There is a decent chance that will happen again. But this bill is not going to happen because it is so emaciated, so filled with poison pills, so partisanly designed—it was designed to fail.

Now, the Republican leader claims the vote this week will expose Democratic obstruction and delay—another one of these “Alice in Wonderland”-type statements—but, of course, Democrats weren't the ones who said: Let's put the Senate on pause. Who said that? Democrats didn't say: Let's wait and see. Who said that? Democrats didn't delay for 4 months while the Nation suffered. In fact, the House passed a bill with the broad support of Senate Democrats.

So while the President was lying to the American people about the coronavirus, Senate Republicans were following suit in spirit. The Republican leader himself talked about the lack of urgency in his caucus to address the problem. So the idea that Democrats, who passed a comprehensive relief package through the House nearly 4 months ago, are the cause of delay and obstruction is ridiculous. It has been the Republicans all along. The record shows it.

From the beginning, from way back in March after the CARES Act passed, Democrats have insisted on continuing a program of assistance to the American people. We proposed legislation to give hazard pay to essential workers, rental assistance, housing assistance, nutrition assistance, legislation to extend the enhanced unemployment benefits that kept nearly 12 million Americans out of poverty, money for rural broadband, money to help our restaurants and our hotels. We have proposed many different things, none of which are in the Republican bill.

House Democrats passed the Heroes Act through their Chamber. So far, it is the only major COVID relief bill since the CARES Act to pass either Chamber of Congress. Meanwhile, as the spring turned into summer and as summer approached fall, Republicans dithered and delayed. They pushed their chips in with President Trump's lie and hoped the virus would miraculously disappear and everything would be all better. Rather than use the power of the Federal Government to help our citizens during a once-in-a-lifetime crisis, Senate Republicans closed their eyes and crossed their fingers, hoping they wouldn't have to do anything. Sound familiar? It is just what President Trump tried to do as well.

Here now, in September, Republicans finally felt the public pressure to support a bill, but instead of working with Democrats on something that could pass, our friends on the other side tried to find the bare minimum that Senate Republicans could support. They had 20 Republican Senators—in the words of the leader—who wanted to spend no money. The greatest economic crisis since the Depression, the greatest health crisis since the Spanish flu just about a century ago, and 20 Republicans want to spend nothing. They are the tail wagging the Republican dog.

So the Republican leader didn't know what to do. He proposed a meager bill,

a skinny bill of \$1 trillion, but even that wasn't good enough for the hard right—the large hard right—in his caucus. So he put together, with spit and polish, an emaciated bill that hardly does a thing—that leaves out so many Americans, it doesn't come close to meeting the moment—so he might say he might be able to bring something on the floor with a modicum of support in his caucus.

It is insufficient. It is completely inadequate. It does not help renters keep a roof over their heads or American families put food on the table. It short-changes healthcare and education. It does not provide a dime to protect essential State and local services. It is laden with poison pills, provisions our colleagues know Democrats would never support, to guarantee the bill's failure.

The truth is, the Republicans and the Republican leader don't want to pass a bill. Too many on the hard right—in the Senate and outside it—would be angry if they actually put together a bill that could pass.

So Leader MCCONNELL, this morning, demanded that Democrats name exactly what we oppose in their bill, like it was some kind of challenge. How about the broad immunity provisions? From the day he announced them, he knew that it wouldn't get Democratic support. How about the Betsy DeVos school choice plan that would funnel money into private schools while he neglected the real needs of our public schools? Of course Democrats would oppose that. He knew that. He knows that.

The truth is, this emaciated bill is not a serious attempt at legislation or solving the real problems in our country. It is a shame. It is one of the most cynical moves I have seen, a fairly transparent attempt to show that the Republicans are doing something, when, in fact, they want to do nothing, in reality.

We are in the middle of a pandemic, historic unemployment, industries struggling from one end of America to the other, and Leader MCCONNELL isn't searching for bipartisan progress; he seems to be looking for political cover. Once this bill goes down, we will be right where we started at the start of the week: waiting for our Republican colleagues to wake up to the size of the crisis in our country and work with us on a bill that actually makes sense.

We want to work on a bipartisan bill. The Speaker and I have come down \$1 trillion off our initial request, which was based on the real needs of the American people during this pandemic crisis. Our Republican colleagues—both the President's minions and the Republican Senate—have refused to budge.

I still have some hope, once this bill is defeated. If past is prologue, there is actually a significant chance that the public heat on many Republican Senators, as they go back home, will have them come to their senses and they will start negotiating with us in a serious way. That happened on COVID 2. It

happened on COVID 3. It happened on COVID 3.5. I pray and plead, for the sake of our country and the people who are suffering, that it will happen again and that Republicans, once they see they can't pass this emaciated, terribly insufficient, and poison-pill-pocked proposal, will start negotiating in reality with us—something they have not done as of yet.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Madam President, now on President Trump, yesterday it was reported that, in taped interviews with Bob Woodward, President Trump acknowledged that he knew the danger posed by COVID-19 way back in February but he deliberately—deliberately—downplayed the threat to the American people. We now know that the President wasn't ill-informed. He wasn't being overly optimistic. He was lying to the American people. He was deliberately downplaying the virus to the American people at a time when early and forceful action could have saved so many lives.

Look, when the house is on fire—a five-alarm fire—you have an obligation to let people know. If you don't, they are going to burn, and they are going to die.

When we look at the rest of the world and see why they are doing better than we are in fighting this disease, the reason is simple: They had some leadership. We have had none from the White House—none. We have had lying. We have had ignoring the problem. We have had misleading the American people but no leadership at a time when we desperately need it.

Other leaders around the world were clear about science. They faced up to the problem and worked hard to solve it. They instituted policies to test, trace, and isolate. We had a President who simply lied about the dangers of the disease and suggested that Americans inject bleach. Other leaders took responsibility and ownership. We had a President who said: "It is what it is." In the annals of history, this will be one of the five greatest examples of lack of leadership in American history.

President Trump, the history books are not going to regard you kindly. They are not going to regard you kindly.

The President is coming up with great excuses now for his perfidious lies. This time, he said he didn't want to tell the truth about COVID because it might cause panic. Really? Is this the same President who is busy panicking America right now, telling women in the suburbs that their safety is at risk when the suburbs are not at risk at all? Is this the same President who invented a caravan of migrants in an attempt to panic Americans before the last election? This President always uses panic as a tool when he thinks it serves his interest, so the idea that he did it because he didn't want to panic Americans does not ring true. It seems like an *ex post facto* excuse for the President's perfidious lies.

President Trump doesn't mind panicking people when it serves his interest. What is worse is that he will not tell the truth when it hurts his interest, even if lives are at stake.

The President's comments in this interview were despicable. It should serve as a warning to all Americans about who this man is and his total, complete abject failure to lead.

(Mr. SCOTT of Florida assumed the Chair.)

TRANSIT

Mr. President, finally, on transit, COVID-19 has changed nearly every aspect of American life, but Senate Republicans and the White House only want to address the barest sliver of the problems in our country, so this week I have been pointing out many of the things that the Republican proposal leaves out.

Yesterday, I spoke about the plight of live venues and the need to save that essential part of our culture and our economy. Today I want to address another topic that has received far too little attention from the Senate Republicans: transit.

Public transportation systems are the lifeblood of great American cities. Regional networks connect workers to jobs and consumers and businesses. As anyone can imagine, during the pandemic, while transit authorities like the MTA have continued round-the-clock operations to serve the people, ridership on public transportation has plummeted, leaving them in a state of crisis. God forbid if public transportation were forced to shutter or drastically reduce operations, like on Long Island, where they rely on the Long Island Rail Road. The damage to regional economies and to the national economy would be severe. But there is not a penny—not one single penny—in the Republican bill to help public transit systems or even help State and local governments, which fund a lot of the transit systems—not a penny.

My Republican friends seem to look at this crisis through a narrow lens. Some of my colleagues have criticized Democrats for the outrageous idea of wanting to help our State governments and the essential public services they provide.

I have news for our colleagues. These regional transit systems are mission critical to the national economy. It is not just a New York problem or a New Jersey problem or an Illinois problem, it is a national crisis.

The Metropolitan Transit Authority alone carries about 40 percent of the Nation's transit riders and drives as much as 10 percent of the national GDP—10 percent. The facts argue for heavy investment in public transportation systems to stanch the bleeding and jump-start the economy when the pandemic wanes. The lack of investment in transit systems in the Republican legislation is unacceptable.

ELECTION SECURITY

Mr. President, finally, according to a whistleblower complaint filed by a

former senior official in the Office of Intelligence and Analysis at the Department of Homeland Security, political leaders at DHS told him to refrain from sharing reports about Putin's efforts to interfere with our elections because "they make the President look bad." And this DHS whistleblower goes on to allege a broader pattern by Trump and his lieutenants of politicizing and misrepresenting intelligence, altering the information to fit the President's way of thinking, what the President thinks makes him look good.

We know this President doesn't like to hear the truth. He literally can't handle it. But what is even more alarming is that former DNI Director Dan Coats, according to Bob Woodward's new book, could not shake his "deep suspicions" that Vladimir Putin "had something" on the President.

Many Americans believe what Coats said; that the reason Donald Trump bows down in obeisance to Putin is that Putin knows something that the President doesn't want made public.

That is how egregious the pattern of President Trump's behavior has been. It cries out for an explanation, and there is no logical one. There is no honorable one. President Trump's pattern of downplaying the threat from Putin, placating the dictator, and pursuing policies that have long been the goal of Moscow asks an enormous question: What does President Putin know that President Trump is so afraid of?

Here is what needs to happen. Before we leave for the election, there has to be an all-Senators briefing on the threat from Putin to our election. Every Senator—Democratic, Republican, liberal, conservative, North, South, East, and West—has an obligation to our constituents and the country we all love to find out what exactly Putin is up to.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. DURBIN. I want to thank my colleague from New York for his comments this morning. He is right. We have seen this play before. We know how it ends. Senator MCCONNELL, the Republican leader, comes to the floor and proclaims that his latest creation is bipartisan; the Democrats have a choice to vote yes or no; take it or leave it; we are done.

We have been through this over and over again. That is not how Congress or human activity works. We have a split government between Democrats and Republicans. When we sit down together and compromise, good things can happen. We proved it March 26. The vote was 96 to 0 for the CARES Act, a \$3 trillion bill early on to address the coronavirus pandemic and to deal with the serious challenges to our economy.

Thank goodness we did it. It gave \$600 a week in additional Federal supplements and unemployment to families who were facing layoffs and closures of their businesses. We helped